THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) The total staff strength is as under:

ITI—32,374
HTL—1838
TCIL—302
MTNL—49804
VSNL—3,028.

(b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The Government policy is to reserve posts at the rate of 15 per cent and 7½ per cent for SCs/STs respectively while making direct recruitment upto the lowest rank of Group 'A' Posts *i.e.*, in the scale of Rs. 2200—4000 or equivalent.

Refund of rent for dead telephones

2909. SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state whether there is any arrangement for the refund rent charged for dead telephones and overbilling in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): Yes, Sir, when the telephones, telex services, leased lines and junction lines in case of a PABX/PBX of a subscriber remain interrupted continuously for 15 days or more due to departmental reasons rebate in rental is granted.

Rebates on excess billing complaints are allowed on the basis of justification, if any, found after due investigation.

Waiting lists for telephones in metropolitan cities

2910. SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of intending telephone subscribers on the waiting list in each of the metropolitain cities and State Capitals as on the 1st January, 1989;

(b) the dates of registration upto which subscribers on the waiting lists have been provided with telephones;

(c) by when the subscribers in the waiting list in aech one of these cities would be provided with telephones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) and (b) The information is given in the enclosed Statement. (*See below*).

(c) The objective of the department for the Seventh Plan (1985—90) is to provide telephone connections by the end of Seventh Five Year Plan (by 31-3-90) to those applicants who have been registered on an average upto:

(i) 30-9-86 in all metropolitan towns and all major telephone districts.

(ii) 1-4-87 in all minor telephone districts and in all large size exchanges of capacity more than 2000 lines; and

(iii) 1-4-88 in all exchanges of capacity between 200 lines and 2000 lines.

The remaining applicants shall be provided with telephone connections progressively during the Eighth Plan period.